

Ilario Pantano first enlisted in the Marine Corps at the age of 17 and was inspired to reenlist following the terrorist attack of September 11 of 2001, 10 years after his service as an elite marine sniper and a veteran of Desert Storm.

Answering the patriotic call to duty, Lieutenant Pantano voluntarily left a successful career in finance to head to officer's training school in Quantico, Virginia. As a platoon commander in Iraq, Lieutenant Pantano was praised by his fellow marines and superiors as a capable and devoted leader and an intelligent and motivated officer who embodied the Marine Corps principles of honor, courage, and commitment.

As someone who had the pleasure of meeting Lieutenant Pantano, along with his lovely wife, Jill, and his two sons, I believe every American would benefit from reading the inspiring story of such a great American and a military hero.

Mr. Speaker, I am confident that those who read Lieutenant Pantano's story will come to a better understanding of the depth of his strength and heroism, both on the battlefield and in the courtroom.

Mr. Speaker, I close by asking God to please bless the men and women in uniform and to ask God to continue to bless America.

RAISING AWARENESS OF AUTISM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring attention to a disease that has a profound impact on those it afflicts. Autism is a bioneurological developmental disability that generally appears before the age of 3.

Autism impacts the normal development of the brain in the areas of social interaction, communication skills, and cognitive function. Individuals with autism typically have difficulties communicating and interacting with others and often engage in repetitive behaviors. Individuals with autism often suffer from numerous physical ailments, which may include allergies, asthma, epilepsy, digestive disorders, persistent viral infections, feeding disorders, sensory integration dysfunction, sleeping disorders and more.

Some may be surprised, Mr. Speaker, to learn that autism is diagnosed four times more often in boys than girls. Its prevalence is not affected by race, region or socioeconomic status. According to the National Autism Association, autism and related developmental disorders affect one in 166 people across the country, 10 times as many as just a decade ago.

No one knows for certain what causes autism. Some believe that anything from genetics to certain vaccines can lead to autism. Those with infants and toddlers should watch for the early signs of autism, which include no big

smiles by 6 months, no sharing of sounds, smiles or facial expressions by 9 months, and no babbling by 12 months, no words by 18 months, and any loss of speech or social skills at any age.

I wish to repeat that, Mr. Speaker: those with infants and toddlers should watch for the early warning signs of autism, which include no big smiles by 6 months, no sharing of sounds, smiles or facial expressions by 9 months, no babbling by 12 months, no words by 18 months, and any loss of speech or social skills at any age.

Autism, however, does not affect life expectancy. Currently there is no cure for autism, though with early intervention and treatment, the diverse symptoms related to autism can be greatly improved. This makes it imperative that appropriate resources are available to help people with autism and their families.

Mr. Speaker, I intend to take to this floor over the coming weeks and months to highlight the impact autism has on those it afflicts and those who care for them. I hope by doing so that I can help raise awareness about this disease and encourage greater understanding about the importance of research into its prevention, detection and treatment.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. LEE addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GOHMERT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 5672, SCIENCE, STATE, JUSTICE, COMMERCE, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2007

Mr. GINGREY, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report

(Rept. No. 109-529) on the resolution (H. Res. 890) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 5672) making appropriations for Science, the Departments of State, Justice, and Commerce, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4973, FLOOD INSURANCE REFORM AND MODERNIZATION ACT OF 2006

Mr. GINGREY, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 109-530) on the resolution (H. Res. 891) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4973) to restore the financial solvency of the national flood insurance program, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

JOBS AND THE ECONOMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise at this time to say a few words about the U.S. economy, which has been actually quite good. It is quite amazing for us here in the House with all of the responsibilities that we have and with all of the responsibilities outside of the beltway that the American people have to just take a minute or a few minutes, I guess, to review the current economic situation.

Mr. Speaker, as the chairman of the Joint Economic Committee, some of the observations are quite apparent to me, and I just wanted to share these observations with my colleagues and with others who may be present.

According to Mr. Speaker, to most neutral observers, including the Federal Reserve and a consensus of private economists, the economy is doing quite well and is quite healthy. Indeed, if anything, there seems to be a little concern in some quarters that the economy may have been growing too fast, a concern with which I do not agree.

The economy actually grew 4 percent in 2004 and advanced at a rate of about 3.5 percent in 2005. The growth rate for the first quarter of 2006 is expected to be very robust, consistent with the trend of strong growth since 2003.

In the first quarter of 2006, the economy expanded at a blistering rate of 5.3 percent. Now, these are all figures and statistics that we can vividly see because, in effect, we have already been through them. Looking ahead is a somewhat more difficult exercise, and an exercise that I often refer to others with whom I communicate from time to time.